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DOBB'S THEORIES OF ECONOMIC HISTORY

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I

Maurice Herbert Dobb, lecturer in Economics in the University of Cambridge, in 1946 published his "Studies in the Development of Capitalism." In his Preface to the "Studies," the illustrious author, on his firm conviction that economic analysis only makes sense and can only bear fruit if it is joined to a study of historical development," and, therefore, that the conviction that "a study of Capitalism in its origins and growth," so much neglected by economists (other than those of Marxist persuasion) is an essential foundation for any realistic system of economics," endeavored to "generalise about historical development on the basis of material already collected and arranged by other hands" (Studies, Preface, p. vii). This work, in a word, tried to lay down rules of the development of capitalism from the standpoint of the Marxist theory of economics by properly arranging the material collected by the "bourgeois theory of its development."

Although such aim of Dobb as evinced in his work is not necessarily unfamiliar in Japan where the Marxist theory of historical development of economy is more or less well-known, it is considered of vaster significance in Western Europe, where the tradition of the German Historical School is deeprooted, than is generally construed in Japan. Mr. Shiro Masuda, in his endeavor to analyze the circumstances involved, explained the situation in the following words: "The fact that a section of students of economic history is liberated from the hegemony of the German historical sciences with such brilliant traditions trailing in the past, and has boldly embarked upon a cooperation with economists, will not afford to be overlooked, although it must be admitted that embryonic symptoms for such were already discernible in the attitude of English and French economists."¹⁾ The "Studies" by Dobb is a work to direct and represent such a new tendency noticeable among the students of economic history in Western Europe, which was so tersely pointed out by Mr. Masuda.

In his effort to criticize Dobb, Sweezy, an American Marxist economist, who, together with Dobb, represents the new tendency in the field of

1) "Shiso" (Thought), July, 1951, p. 18.

economics, issued his "Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism," to which Dobb replied in his "Reply"¹⁾, thus starting the "Dobb-Sweezy Controversy" so well-known in Japan. By tracing the details of this "Controversy," the outstanding features of Dobb's theories of economic history on the historical development of economics will easily be analyzed. Mr. Shiro Masuda, who consistently maintained a comparatively impartial position with regard to the conflict of views between these two lines analyzing the "difference of tendencies between these two scholars," says: "while in the case of Dobb, he, on the basis of heaps of tangible achievements in thorough researches made by English scholars concerned, and under the positive consciousness of the possible direction which English post-war economy is liable to take, apparently endeavored to theorize on the structural modification of the economic society, Sweezy, an American living in America, appears to have tried, on the basis of Marx's *Das Kapital* and Engels' *Letters*, and, at best, of well-known works by Pirenne, to tackle with the problem of the social evolution, so to speak, of the gradual metamorphosis and development by dint of division of labor and rationalization."²⁾

Thus, the conflict between Dobb and Sweezy would be interpreted as a conflict between two trends of Marxism, one standing for revolution and another for reform (distorted) and this is the reason why the "Controversy," both in its origin and in the way of its disposal, was considered to have so much in common with a similar conflict between two different trends of Marxism which had for so long been in actual existence in Japan. It, thus, naturally followed that Japanese scholars in this regard were distinctly divided into two opposing camps with respect to their attitude toward this "Controversy." Such person of the Mr. Otsuka school of theory of economic history as Kohachiro Takahashi³⁾, Kenji Kawano and Takuya Hadori⁴⁾ supported the stand of Dobb, while Kozo Uno and Kentaro Hayashi affiliated to the Roono Section (Labor-Agrarian School)⁵⁾ stood behind Sweezy. In short, the famed "Dobb-Sweezy Controversy" is so familiar to Japanese scholastic circles that it almost appeared to have been just a reproduction of similar controversies fought among them for so many years in the past.

1) Science and Society, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1950. Translated in Jan., 1951, of "Keizai Kenkyu" (Studies in Economics).

2) "Shiso" (Thought), July, 1951, p. 20.

3) "Keizai Kenkyu" (Studies in Economics), Apr., 1951.

4) "Shiso" (Thought), Apr., 1951.

5) Ibid.

II

While the "Studies in the Development of Capitalism" by Dobb was an attempt by him to clarify the rules pertaining to the collapse of feudalism, which started in the 12th century and reached its climax in the 14th century (in other words, the disintegration of the feudal system of exaction) and the development of capitalism until the beginning of the Second World War in the (latter) half of the 20th century, the "Dobb-Sweezy Controversy," alluded to in the previous chapter, had to do only with the first half of the subject matter treated in the "Studies." The "Controversy" was fought on the following five points, in the main:

- (1) The problem of the definition of the feudal system;
- (2) The problem of the causes for the collapse of the feudal system;
- (3) The problem of the transition to capitalism from feudalism;
- (4) The problem of "two roads" leading to the formation of capitalism;
- (5) The problem of the original accumulation.

It is noted, in this connection, that the questions of industrial revolution and monopolistic capital are placed totally out of the scope of the "Controversy."

In the following chapters we will endeavor to elucidate pertinent aspects of the "Controversy" in an effort to clarify the characteristics in the method of Dobb's theories of the historical development of economy.

III

We shall have to start our study with the problems involved in the definition of feudalism and the causes leading to its eventual collapse.

Dobb, in his "Studies," criticizing Struve's jurisprudential interpretation of feudalism, especially Pokrovsky's definition of feudalism which tends to view it as identical with a system of self-sufficient "natural economy" in the sense that it stands diametrically opposed to a moneyed exchange economy, said that the feudalism was nothing less than a "mode of production" and that the "emphasis of this definition will be...in the relation between the direct producer and his superior overlord and in the social economic content of the obligation which connects them...as such it will be virtually with serfdom." By serfdom, Dobb meant an "obligation laid on the producer by force and independently of his own volition to fulfill certain economic demands of an overlord whether these demands take the

form of services to be performed or of dues to be paid in money or in kind." His definition thus covers both the serfdom in the narrower sense and the villeinage. Other various features of feudalism was treated by Dobb as accompanying his so-called "feudal serfdom." Dobb interpreted even "natural economy" as a property accompanying such "feudal serfdom" and not an essential one.¹⁾

Sweezy criticizes Dobb on the same stand as was taken by Pokrovsky, whom Dobb had accused of being non-Marxist or of being after the fashion of Schmoller. Serfdom, which was taken by Dobb as representative of the mode of production in a feudal society, was ruled out by Sweezy, who, quoting Engels' Letters, argued that such would be seen frequently in relations between the conqueror and the conquered and therefore could not be considered as constituting part of the definition of feudalism. Sweezy, instead, apparently thought that the foundation of feudalism should be found in the "system of production," that is, the "system of production for use" or self sufficient "natural economy" as was called by Pokrovsky.²⁾ Thus, Dobb said of Sweezy in the following vein, and rightly :

"He seems to be contrasting a system of production with a mode of production in Marx's use of this term. What precisely a system of production is intended to cover I am not clear. But what follows indicates that the term is intended to include the relations between the producer and his market. There are even hints that.....these relations of exchange (by contrast with relations of production) are the focus of attention in Sweezy's interpretation of the historical progress."³⁾

The conflict as existed between Dobb and Sweezy had as a matter of course develop into a conflict of views regarding the collapse of feudalism. Dobb, who interpreted feudalism in terms of the relations of production, took the collapse of feudalism as the natural consequence of the development of various contradictions inherent in the feudal system itself. According to Dobb :

"What is clearly missing in the traditional interpretation is an analysis of the internal relationships of feudalism as a mode of production and the part which these played in determining the disintegration or survival and while the actual outcome has to be treated as a result of a complex interaction between the external impact of the market and these internal relationships of the system, there is a sense in which it is the latter that can be

1) Dobb: "Studies", p. 35.

2) Refer Jan., 1951 issue of the "Keizai Kenkyu" (Studies in Economics).

Sweezy: "Transition" (Science and Society, Vol. XIV, No. 2.) p. 136.

3) Dobb: "Reply", (Science and Society, Vol. No. 2.) p. 158.

said to have exercised the decisive influence." Now, the internal contradictions as mentioned by Dobb as being inherent in feudalism pertain to the contradictions perceivable between the low efficiency of feudalism or the limited scope for exploitation and the increase of needs for income on the part of the ruling classes or, in other words, the increase for the need of exploitation, and this frontal collision of interests had eventually to develop into the class struggle.¹⁾ Therefore, Dobb, while duly emphasizing the part trade played in the disintegration of feudalism, said at the same time that: "trade exercised its influence to the extent that it accentuated the internal conflicts within the old mode of production."²⁾

Sweezy took a position totally different from such. To him, who interpreted it as a "system of production for use," the progress of exchange economy, involving the expansion of towns and markets, appeared to be mere external phenomena attendant upon feudalism, and, therefore, he had to take the stand of explaining the disintegration of feudalism on the strength of the development of trade, mere external phenomenon attendant upon the system. For Sweezy, the contradictions inherent in feudalism had to be dissolved in the external conflict between natural economy and moneyed economy.

The practical outcome of the conflict between these two scholars concerning the collapse of feudalism and therefore, the disintegration of the system of labor rents, was as follows. Sweezy supported the "traditional interpretation".....the interpretation that as trade expanded and in the area where trade expanded, feudalism had to fall and the system of labor services to be paid had to disintegrate....., which was strongly rejected by Dobb in his "Studies," and even endeavored to prove the authenticity of such interpretation. On the other hand, however, Dobb expands his theory starting from doubting the propriety of such traditional interpretation on the basis of recent studies made by Kosminsky and Postan. The progress of trade, according to Dobb, would either revive and strengthen serfdom as was seen in the 13th century England and in the Eastern Elbe region in the 15th-16th centuries, or lead to its decline as in the case of the 14th century England, this being influenced solely by inherent internal relationships.³⁾ The main point, thus, hinges upon the internal relationships inherent in the feudal system.

It is, thus, seen that Dobb tried to explain the collapse of feudalism from its internal contradictions, while Sweezy made his effort of explanation from the external conflict.

1) Dobb: "Studies" p. 42.
p. 160.

2) Dobb: "Reply" (Science and Society, Vol. XIV. No. 2.)

3) Dobb: "Studies" Chap. 11, Sect. 11 & 111.

IV

Let us now proceed to the question of the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

Marx, while making clear that labor rents ceased to exist towards the ends of the 14th century to be replaced by money rents by stating that "serfdom practically ceased to exist in England towards the latter years of the 14th century. The greater majority of the population, the percentage increasing further in the 15th century, consisted of free and self-operating farmers, no matter what feudal excuses were used to hide the identity of their possessions,"¹⁾ said, on the other hand, that "the cooperation in production based on division of labor takes its typical shape in manufacture, which predominantly dominates as a characteristic form of capitalistic productive process during the period of intrinsic manufacture ranging from the middle part of the 16th century up to the last one-third of the 18th."²⁾

The feudalistic mode of production was represented by the relations of acquisition in agriculture, while feudalistic rents were the materialistic expression of the feudalistic mode of production. The conception of rents in the feudal society corresponds to that of the surplus value in the capitalistic one, and, therefore, the progressive stages of a feudal society may be measured by the changes brought in the shape of feudal rents, or in other words, in the series of transition from labor rents to rents by products and on to the rents in money³⁾, while the progressive stages of the capitalistic mode of production by the series of the production of relative surplus value, or, in other words, in the transition from industrial cooperation to manufacture and on to the factory. Thus, it would be said that the period from the latter years of the 14th century to the middle years of the 16th century saw the prevalence of the money rents in terms of the feudalistic mode of production, and of industrial cooperation in terms of the capitalistic mode of production. Although mere simple industrial cooperation "is never a fixed shape of a certain specific progressive stage of the capitalistic mode of production"⁴⁾, it is undeniable that a capitalistic mode of production was being engendered during this period, which was to induce the emergence of simple industrial cooperation or primitive manufacture.

The period in England from the latter part of the 14th century to the middle part of the 16th century was such a period in its characteristics. Now, how should this period be comprehended?

1) Marx: "Das Kapital." Bd. 1, S. 775.

2) Marx: "Das Kapital." Bd. 1, S. 352.

3) Marx: "Das Kapital." Bd. 3, Kap. 47.

4) Marx: "Das Kapital." Bd. 1, Kap. 11.

Mr. Dobb, presenting this problem in a clear shape, said :

"The disintegration of the feudal mode of production has already reached an advanced stage before the capitalist mode of production developed and that this integration did not proceed in any close association with the growth of the new mode of production within the womb of the old. The two hundred-odd years which separated Edward III and Elizabeth were certainly transitional in character."¹⁾ In this case, Dobb meant much things in his "transitional" than would Sweezy. On this Sweezy said: "It follows that the intervening period was not a simple mixture of feudalism and capitalism; the predominant elements were neither feudal nor capitalist."²⁾ He defined it as the "pre-capitalist commodity production was neither feudal nor capitalist."³⁾ Dobb criticized these definitions of Sweezy properly, in the following vein :

"These two centuries are apparently left suspended uncomfortably in the firmament between heaven and earth. In the process of historical development, it should be classified as a homeless hybrid."⁴⁾

Dobb's own interpretation of the transitional period was more complex and Marxist in its tendency. He, while quoting, on the one hand, from Marx, that "money rents as a metamorphosed form of rents in kind or as an object antagonistic to them, is the final form.....of various forms of rents which we have hitherto taken up for consideration, at the same time it amounts to the form of their disintegration," or that "the foundation of money rents is identical and same as in the case of rents in kinds, from where it starts,"⁵⁾ points out that commutation, while working to disintegrate the feudal system of production, will never supersede the relation of exploitation between the feudal landowner and the direct producer,⁶⁾ and goes on to say that in the feudal society where such money rents are established: "In the urban handicraft and in the rise of well-to-do freehold farmers, one sees a mode of production which had won its independence from feudalism; petty production of the workerowner, artisan of peasant-type, which was not capitalist, although containing within itself the embryo of capitalist relations and even showing signs of coming into subjection to capital from outside,"⁷⁾ thus indicating the emergence of new factors which was bound to break up the feudal system of production itself. The period of transition in England, ranging from the closing years of the 14th century to the middle years of the 16th century, of which Dobb tries to refer, was in a state

1) Dobb: "Studies", p. 20.

3) Sweezy: "Transition", p. 155.

5) Marx: "Das Kapital." Bd. 3, S. 330.

6) Dobb: "Studies", p. 20.

2) Sweezy: "Transition", p. 150.

4) Dobb: "Reply", p. 162.

6) Dobb: "Reply", p. 164.

of feudal society still in the stage of money rents, wherein it should be noted, that already seeds for new capitalist relations were brewing the womb of the obsolete relations of feudal exploitation, which, already in the period of disintegration, had not yet been totally superseded.

It is apparent that Sweezy failed to fully comprehend these contradictions. In referring to Sweezy's conception of "pre-capitalist commodity production," Dobb said:

"While this sort of answer might be adequate enough in a purely evolutionary view of historical development through successive systems or stages, I suggest that it will not do for a revolutionary development.....a view of history as a succession of class systems, with social revolution (in the sense of a transfer of power from one class to another) as the crucial mechanism of historical transformation."¹. This amply discloses the non-Marxist method employed by Sweezy, contrasting it to his own "revolutionary view."

It should be said, in this connection, that even Dobb did not full comprehend various contradictions involved in this period of transition. Probably, the view the present author takes of the position of Dobb tends to be rather too favorable. Dobb says: "The disintegration of the feudal mode of production has already reached an advanced stage before the capitalist mode of production developed and that this integration did not proceed in any close association with the growth of the new mode of production within the womb of the old." This description will be liable to give the student the impression that he is trying to stress that the feudal mode of production reached a high stage of disintegration toward the closing years of the 14th century while a new capitalist mode of production suddenly emerged in the middle part of the 16th century. It should be noted, however, that Marx had a quite different description to give regarding this particular point. For instance, Marx says (in part):

"In England the serfdom saw its virtual end in the closing years of the 14th century. The greater majority of the population there at that time, and even more so in the 15th century, consisted of free and self-supporting farmers, no matter what feudal disguises then concealed their possessions. In comparatively large manors, the supervisors, who themselves had once been serfs, were driven out by liberated tenant farmers. Agrarian wage earners were composed, for one thing, of those farmers who made use of their leisure time by laboring under big landowners, and, for another, of others, less in number both relatively or absolutely, who were actual wage labourers in the true sense of the word. This latter, as a matter of fact,

1) Dobb: "Reply", p. 162.

were none else than self-supporting farmers in their intrinsic nature."¹⁾ Commutation, which means the transformation of the "villain," shouldering labor rents, into "free and self-supporting farmers" under "feudal guises," that is, into "customary holder" and "copy holder" who shoulders fixed money rents, would in itself signify that they were then under the process of the capitalist class differentiation into well-to-do farmers or small bourgeois, and poor farmers or semi-proletariats. The entire process that actually took place was not, as apparently Dobb endeavored to impress, such that the disintegration of the feudal mode of production preceded the appearance on the surface of the new capitalist mode of production. It is noted here that Dobb's mistaken interpretation of this particular circumstance worked to lead to a wrong direction the problem of the original accumulation. This point will be touched again later.

V

Lastly, let us proceed to the question of "two ways" in the establishment of capitalism and of the original accumulation.

In general, it would be said that Sweezy tried to enervate the theory of internal contradictions contained in Marxism—the theory of social evolution through class struggle, while Dobb endeavored to retain this very theory as the essential factor of Marxism. At the bottom of the frontal conflict between Dobb and Sweezy always stand such fundamental conflict regarding the method employed, and the cognition of this fact has already enabled us to see that the conflict of views on the question of the transitional period which existed between them did actually originate in this fundamental conflict on the method. And, this conflict is unmistakably observable in the "two ways" in the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

Dobb, basing his argument on Marx's famous sentences in chapter 20, Vol. 3 of "Das Kapital," says:

"According to the first.....the really revolutionary way".....a section of the producers themselves accumulated capital and took to trade, and in course of time began to organize production on a capitalist basis free from the handicraft restrictions of guild. According to the second, a section of the existing merchant class began to "take possession directly of production," thereby "serving historically as a mode of transition," but becoming eventually "an obstacle to a real capitalist mode of production and declining with the development of the latter,"²⁾ and further:

1) Marx: "Das kapital," Bd. 1, S. 775.

2) Dobb: "Studies", p. 123.

"The merchant.....manufacturer.....no longer simply fattened on the existing mode of production and tightened the economic producers, but by changing the mode of production increased its inherent productivity..... while the growing interest shown by sections of merchant capital in controlling production.....in developing what may be termed a deliberately contrived system of "exploitation through trade".....prepared the way for this final outcome, and may in a few cases have reached it. This final stage generally seems, as Marx pointed out, to have been associated with the rise from the ranks of the producers themselves of a capitalist element, half-manufacturer, half-merchant, which began to subordinate and to organize those very ranks from which it had so recently risen."¹⁾ In the foregoing lines, he elaborately outlines the conflict between these "two ways" and the eventual victory in England of the "really revolutionary way."

However, why was it that these "two ways" were found to be of such necessity: Dobb argues about the "two ways" maintaining his full consciousness of this question. For instance, he writes:

"Smaller gentry and rising Kulaks were organizers of the country cloth industry on an extensive scale. Evidently they were a most important driving force in the bourgeois revolution of the seventeenth century, providing, in particular, the Cromwell's New-Mode Army. Moreover, the fact that they were is, I believe, a key to understanding the class alignments of the bourgeois revolution, in particular, the reason why merchant capital, far from always playing a progressive role, was often to be found allied with feudal reaction."²⁾ This in effect, was to allude to the confrontation between the transition from merchant-capital and that from the producer, which was to lead to a compromising disintegration of the feudal mode of production confronting a revolutionary change. In other words, this was tantamount to saying that such eventually led to a conflict between the absolutist reform and the revolution—a class struggle.

Note: Lenin, by applying to agriculture the theory of two ways as referred to by Marx, made apparent nature of class struggle or revolutionary nature the theory of two ways. What is at issue here is Lenin's theory of the confrontation of "Prussian-style way" and "American-style way." The theory of two ways bears significance when it is related to class struggle.

In this respect, again, Sweezy is diametrically opposed to Dobb. Sweezy, trying to deduct contradictions or class struggle from history, concentrated his effort on substantially denying Marx's theory of two ways by refusing to admit the main points involved in the theory. He says:

"If we interpret Marx to mean that the really revolutionary way was

1) Dobb: "Studies", p. 128.

2) Dobb: "Reply", p. 165; "Studies", chap. IV, sect. III.

for those with disposable capital to maunch full-fledged capitalist enterprises without going through the intermediate stages of the putting out system, we shall, I think, have little difficulty in finding a wealth of evidence to support his contention. Nef has shown conclusively (of course, without any reference at all to Marx) that what he calls the first industrial revolution in England (about 1540 to 1640) was very largely characterized by precisely this kind of investment in such new industries as mining, metallurgy, brewing, sugar refining, soap, alum, glass and salt-making.....economic supremacy over all rival nations and the first bourgeois political revolution."¹⁾

Thus he distorted the theory of the two ways to the question whether the same commercial capital transformed into the large capitalistic enterprise directly or through the putting out system. The subject is the same commercial capital.

While it is unmistakably obvious that such interpretation of Marx's theory on the part of Sweezy was an amazing distortion, it should be noted that historical facts have rendered it totally untenable. The "full-fledged capitalist enterprise" mentioned by Sweezy in support of his own interpretation by quoting Nef, or the big manufacture was a privileged manufacture based on the Patents of Monopoly granted by the absolute monarch under the protection offered by such absolute monarch, in which the courtier capitalist and big commercial capitalist, relying on the prerogative of the absolute monarch, tried to deny the producer chances for rising up in status and thus consolidate their industrial monopoly. The "controversy over monopoly" which steadily aggravated in the early years of the 17th century was, in essence, a struggle staged by small bourgeois classes against the monopoly in the hands of these courtier-capitalist and big commercial capitalist, or big privileged manufacture, which was to develop into an open denial of the prerogative of an absolute monarch upon which such monopoly was based, and afford a factor for the eventual shaping of a bourgeois revolution²⁾. The privileged manufacture, naturally, represented the anti-revolutionary force, while the small bourgeois directing the extensive movement aimed against such monopoly represented the really revolutionary force. The interpretation of the privileged manufacture as was made by Nef-Sweezy has long since been rejected in Japan as well as Europe.

Sweezy made his effort to make it appear as if the privileged manufacture, which has already been stigmatized in the European circles of historical students as being of reactionary nature, represented the "really revolutionary way," culminating in the "first bourgeois revolution," and thus,

1) Sweezy: "Transition", p. 155.

2) Dobb: "Studies", chap. IV, 111.

naturally, tried to utterly discard the part played by the "really revolutionary way" in the true sense of the term, which was represented by small bourgeois classes. If this should be accepted as true, the Cromwell's revolution would have been a revolution directed from above and there would have been no bitter class struggle as is actually recorded in history. The distortion of Marx's theory on the part of Sweezy, thus, would inevitably lead to such absurd conclusions.

Next comes up the question of original accumulation, and Dobb's description of this particular question is so complicated that a proper understanding of it would seem considerably difficult.

Mr. Dobb's explanation of the original accumulation seen in paragraph i of chapter v, "Capital Accumulation and Mercantilism" of his "Studies in the Development of Capitalism" was summed up by Sweezy in the following vein:

"Dobb sees the process of original accumulation as involving two quite distinct phases. First, the rising bourgeoisie acquires at bargain prices (or, in the most favorable case, for nothing, e. g., the church lands under Henry VIII) certain assets and claims to wealth. In this phase, wealth is not only transferred to the bourgeoisie; it is also concentrated in fewer hands, and, later, comes the realization phase. Dobb writes that of no less importance than the first of the process of accumulation was the second and completing phase, by which the objects of the original accumulation were realized or sold in order to make possible an actual investment in industrial production.....a sale of the original objects of accumulation in order with the proceeds to acquire (or to bring into existence) cotton machinery, factory building, iron foundries, raw materials and labor-power"¹⁾.

Dobb's theory that two phases exist in the original accumulation is not only hard to comprehend but also is apparently untenable. If, as Dobb maintains, it is admitted that the rising bourgeoisie is, at one time, to accumulate non-productive assets, and, at later time, exchange it at once for productive factor or means of production and labor-power, it will naturally follow that there should exist a class which buy non-productive assets only. This, as has been pointed out by Sweezy, would seem highly absurd as well as unrealistic, because actually there exists no such class.²⁾

Why has Dobb reached such an absurd conclusion? Why was he so obstinate in sticking to his funny conclusion in spite of the correct criticism passed by Sweezy?³⁾ Of course, Dobb, on his part, has a reason to do it.

It has already been mentioned that Dobb, in his "Studies," said that

1) Sweezy: "Transition", p. 156. 2) Sweezy: "Transition", p. 156.

3) Dobb: "Reply", p. 156.

the "disintegration of the feudal mode of production has already reached an advanced stage before the capitalist mode of production developed and that this integration did not proceed in any close association with the growth of the new mode of production within the womb of the old. The two hundred-odd years which separated Edward III and Elizabeth were certainly transitional in character." What Dobb tries to stress here is that the two hundred-odd years between Edward III and Elizabeth saw the process of the disintegration of the feudal mode of production, and that the capitalist mode of production started from the age of the original manufacture in the middle part of the 16th century. It has already been pointed out that this interpretation is not correct.

How if such interpretation of Dobb be applied to the question of original accumulation? It would be safe to assume that the portion of paragraph i, chapter v of his "Studies" devoted to the elucidation of the issue of original accumulation was written based on this vein of thinking. Dobb interprets in this way:

According to Dobb, the period between the middle part of the 16th century up to the early part of the 17th century was one of the disintegration of the feudal mode of production and was never one of the realisation of the capitalist mode of production, and, therefore, the rising bourgeoisie worked for the disintegration of the feudal mode of production but never was in itself an industrial bourgeoisie, nor was it destined to develop into an industrial bourgeoisie. They invested into non-productive assets, especially lands, the money they had accumulated as commercial capital or else usury capital, which greatly prompted in the Tudor age the process of assimilation between merchant-nobility and money nobility, on one hand, and landed nobility, on the other. By taking the transitional period up to the middle part of the 16th century as representing the process of the disintegration of the feudal mode of production accompanied with the modification of merchant-nobility into landed nobility, Dobb apparently failed to take due cognizance of the process of original accumulation and the resulting development of industrial capital. Thus, Dobb, with the bourgeois revolution, especially in the middle part of the 17th century, as a turning point, had to bring forth his "theory of realisation," involving the sale of lands by merchant-nobility, money-nobility and landed-nobility as well as the question of the original accumulation¹⁾. More important, Dobb seems to concur with Sweezy who denies the "really revolutionary way" at this particular point, by concluding that merchant-nobility, money-nobility and landed-nobility was to change into an industrial bourgeois. Herein probably may be found the

1) Dobb: "Studies", chap. V, sect. 1.

reason why the conflict between Dobb and Sweezy, which is so distinct and clearly defined elsewhere, suddenly loses its color.

It never actually happened that the merchant-nobility, money nobility and landed-nobility, as a class entity, at a certain time, sold their lands, nor was such possible as a matter of fact. What they actually did as a class entity was the expulsion of farmers from the lands they had accumulated, and the pasturing as landowners on the waste lands. This first enclosure movement which dates from the middle part of the 15th century, represented the change into capitalist or Junker of the feudal lords, or, in other words, represented the "Prussian-style" way, while it is undeniable that such had a similarity with the early monopoly starting in the Elizabethan ages, or, the way of "merchants turning into producers," and, actually, both were more or less closely associated to each other.

In the meantime, another "enclosur" was taking place. This enclosure was praised as "useful enclosure" by those people who attacked the previous one as "harmful enclosure." It was made by well-to-do farmers or yeomen, in an unobtrusive but steady fashion, over their neighbors' lands which they had acquired. No sheeps in numbers of thousands were grazed there as feudal lords used to do, but, by hiring neighbors, agricultural management was steadily expanded, and, there class differentiation of well-to-do farmers and destitute farmers was steadily in the making. This, so to speak, was the "American-style" way, which was of the same nature as the "really revolutionary way" in industry, and, actually, both were closely tied up to each other.

With the feudal lords finding themselves in increasing economic difficulties in the face of the inflation in the Tudor ages in the 15th century and with the rise of wool price, the conflict between these two types in the original accumulation became more pronounced. It was not that, as was interpreted by Dobb, the capitalist mode of production was suddenly realised in the middle part of the 16th century. Two original accumulations, two capitalisms were then in a more or less clearly-defined conflict. The rebellion led by Robert Kett in 1549 substantiates this statement.

As long as the enclosure by feudal lords was forcibly undertaken, and that it went on with an overwhelming gravity, the enclosure by well-to-do farmers had to be obstructed at the same time that their own lands were in danger of being acquisitioned. While the enclosure by rich farmers involved seeds for class conflict between them and destitute farmers, both, in relation to the pressure being exerted by feudal lords, had to stand on the common ground and cooperate closely. Thus, the Kett rebellion was strongly tinged by anti-enclosure movement. The process of development was

started by the enclosure by feudal lords, followed by movement opposing this, and by the early monopoly, followed by movement against it. This lasted up to the bourgeois revolution starting in 1640, while, at the root of this developments was a sharp conflict between two opposing groups, one involving merchant-nobility, money-nobility and landed-nobility, and the other consisting of well-to-do farmers and small bourgeois. In other words, this was the confrontation of two original accumulations. When well-to-do farmers and small bourgeois restored powers from merchant-nobility, money-nobility and landed-nobility, the confrontation between the well-to-do farmerssmall bourgeois and destitute farmers (semi-proletariat) came to the fore. Such was the conflict between Cromwell and Leveller, Digger.

If viewed in this way, the metaphysical difficulty of the "phase of accumulation" and the "phase of realization," the explanation of which appeared so difficult for Dobb, will by itself cease to pose any difficulty at all. Dobb was puzzled over this issue because he failed to take into consideration the class nature in original accumulation. Generally speaking, it would be said that the Western economic history have always been too much preoccupied with the sheep-pasturing enclosure and have been liable to lose sight of the significance involved in the "useful enclosure" by well-to-do farmers, or the "small enclosure" as is called by Mr. Hisao Otsuka. It would be well to remember here again the vast implications involved in correctly interpreting the "Prussian style" and the "American style" as was defined by Lenin. Would it be too much to say that Dobb, while being fully aware of the two ways defined by Marx, failed to rightly interpret Lenin's two ways as a natural development from the former?

VI

In the preceding lines, we have followed the outlines of the "Dobb-Sweezy Controversy" in an effort to clarify the outstanding features of Dobb's theories of the economic history. It has already been made clear that Dobb and Sweezy, while equally finding their ground in Marxism, differ much from each other, the former standing for a revolutionary pattern of Marxism and the latter being more in favor of a reformist pattern of Marxism. This confrontation between them has its origin in this—while Dobb, interpreting feudalism in terms of a mode of production, attributes its decline and transition to capitalism to "inherent relations" and "inherent contradictions" leading to a class struggle, Sweezy grasped feudalism as a "system of production," and interpreted its decline of feudalism as a transition of natural economy. money exchange economy to thus, it is natural that a revolution

should come up to the fore in the case of Dobb, while in the case of Sweezy such fades away.

Would it not be said with justice that when Mr. Kozo Uno introduces his "definitions of styles" and lavishes his praise on Sweezy's criticism of Dobb's emphasis on the revival and strengthening of the Labour services, in the following words "even allowing for temporary and partial turning of the table in the tendency, it would not be permissible to lose sight of the glory which may be observed over the entire picture.....the real question at stake is to explain this tendency,"¹⁾ he totally keeps out of his mind the fact that the tendency of confrontation in a revolutionary period or class struggle poses the most important question to be evolved by historical researches and, at the same time, constitutes the very quintessence of Marxism? (manuscripted in Feb., 1951).

1) "Shiso" (Thought), July issue, 1951. p. 62.